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ABSTRACT

This report presents data on a study of the Promoting Achievement in School through Sport (PASS) program as implemented over three years in eight different schools. The study used grade point average (GPA) as the evaluation element. PASS is a daily, year-long high school course using positive aspects of sports culture to enhance academic achievement. It stresses interdisciplinary, student-centered and project-oriented education, with a focus on student self esteem and leadership skills. PASS transcends cultural differences, and brings together the home, school, and community. Comparisons with control group students show that participating student athletes were more likely to show improved grades, and were also more likely to retain or regain academic eligibility for sports participation. These findings are seen as evidence that conscientious sports education can have a positive impact on general academic performance for student athletes. Twelve charts, which make up the bulk of the report, display data on demographics, class makeup by grade level, ethnic composition, gender, increased GPA, grades that did not change, decreased GPA, average increase/decrease in GPA per student, percentage of students who regained academic eligibility, and percentage of students who lost academic eligibility. (PB)

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ED 382 587

AMERICAN SPORTS INSTITUTE

PROMOTING ACHIEVEMENT IN SCHOOL THROUGH SPORT.

Three-Year Impact Study and Summary Report
covering data from 1991-92, 1992-93 and 1993-94 School Years

March 1995

Study Rationale

Providing meaning and significance for students in the day-to-day high school curriculum along with a challenging core of academic subjects is a difficult task for educators. Many have found that you can make students come to school, but you can't make them learn. Kids have to *want* to learn. They have to have a reason for being at school. They have to have a reason for *wanting* to work hard.

Traditionally, sport in our schools has been viewed, at best, as a discipline that takes a back seat to academics, and, at worst, as an impediment to academic achievement. The attitude, "You're here for an education first--sports second," is pervasive.

The American Sports Institute (ASI), a nonprofit educational organization, holds a different position: The positive aspects of sport culture can provide the basis for a challenging academic program, one that offers sports-oriented students a sense of meaning and significance in their lives, and creates a learning environment where students want to be at school, want to learn, and, in fact, do so.

This vision has led to ASI's development of the **Promoting Achievement in School through Sport (PASS)** program, a daily, year-long, high school course that uses the positive aspects of sport culture to enhance academic achievement. The prominent features of PASS are that:

- PASS is interdisciplinary, integrating language arts, philosophy, social studies, psychology, and physical education.
- PASS is student-centered and project-oriented.
- PASS focuses on student self-esteem, responsibility, and leadership.
- PASS transcends cultural differences.
- PASS brings together the home, school, and community.

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In order to validate the theory that the PASS program is effective in generating student success, it was necessary to devise a method for evaluating the program using demonstrable student results. After examining available data, grade point average was chosen as the evaluation element.

While there are several ways to assess student success, and in spite of the fact that grades alone cannot fully describe the impact of the PASS program, grade data is attractive as a measurement tool because of its relative specificity, objectivity, common usage, measurability, ease of collection, and ability to reflect other student-related factors, such as discipline, motivation, attendance, and behavior.

The assumption of the study is that if overall academic performance, as determined by grades, improves due to participation in the PASS class, then that in itself is an important indication of the success of the program.

Background Information

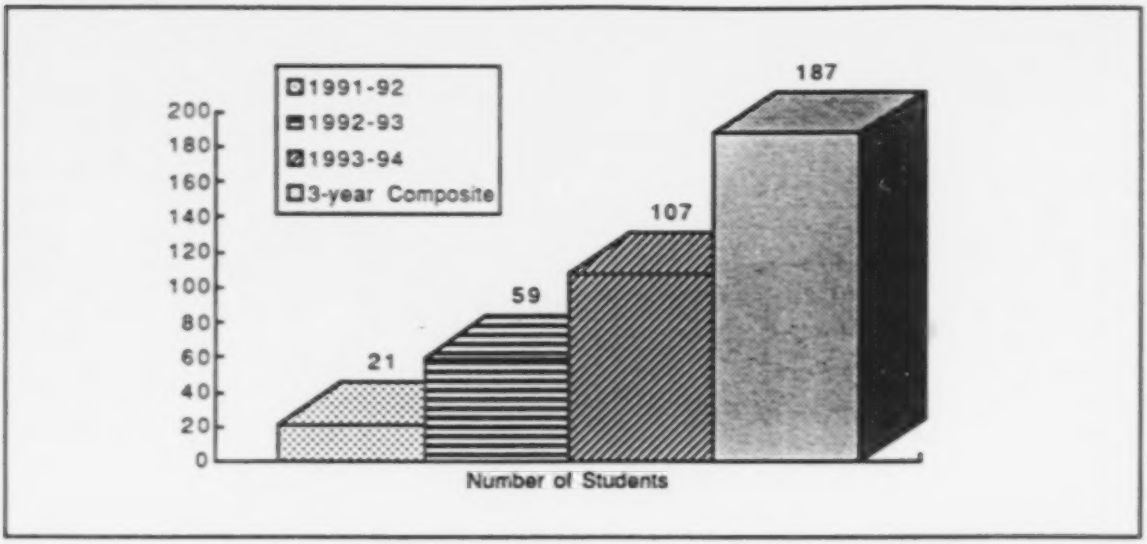
This report presents data collected over the past three years, beginning with the 1991-92 school year when Dr. Kirsch, PASS founder, pilot-tested the program in two high schools, one suburban and one urban, with a total of 21 students. Results from the previous year (1990-91), the first year of pilot-testing the PASS curriculum, while extremely positive, are not included in this report because they are based on a single class of nine students.

In 1992-93, the second year for which results are reported, PASS was taught in four schools. Three first-time PASS instructors, trained by ASI, introduced PASS and Dr. Kirsch continued teaching the program. In 1993-94, PASS was taught in nine classes at eight schools. Eight first-time PASS instructors introduced the program and one veteran PASS instructor continued teaching PASS.

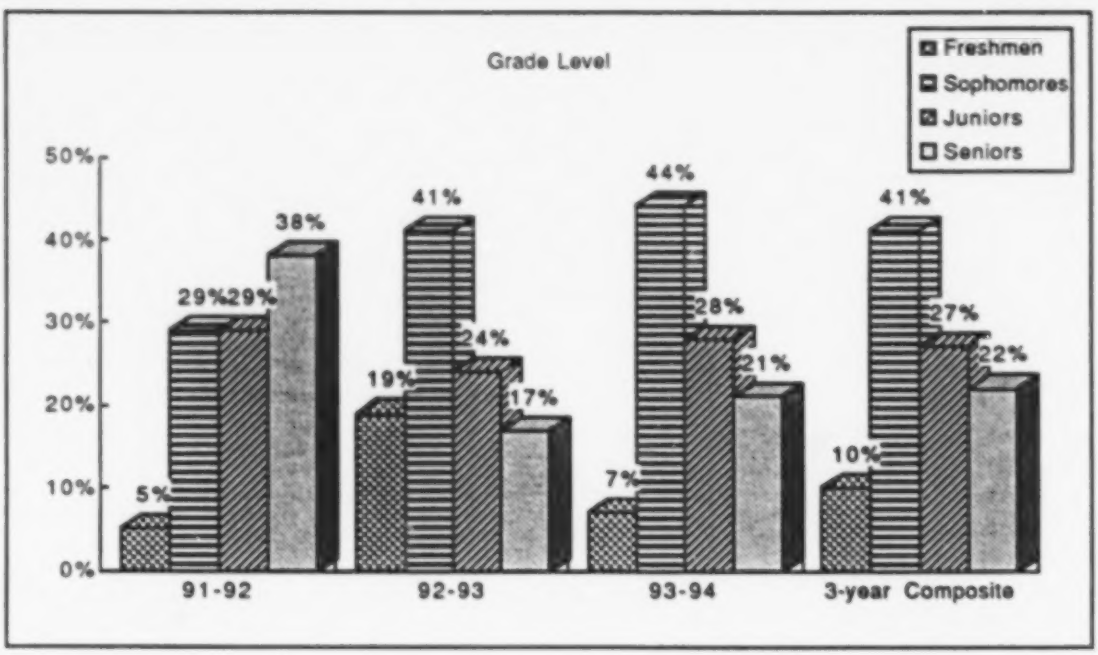
One of the nine teachers pilot-tested PASS in a middle school. Data from that class is not included in the study due to differences in presenting the PASS curriculum at the high school and middle school levels.

Demographics of PASS Students

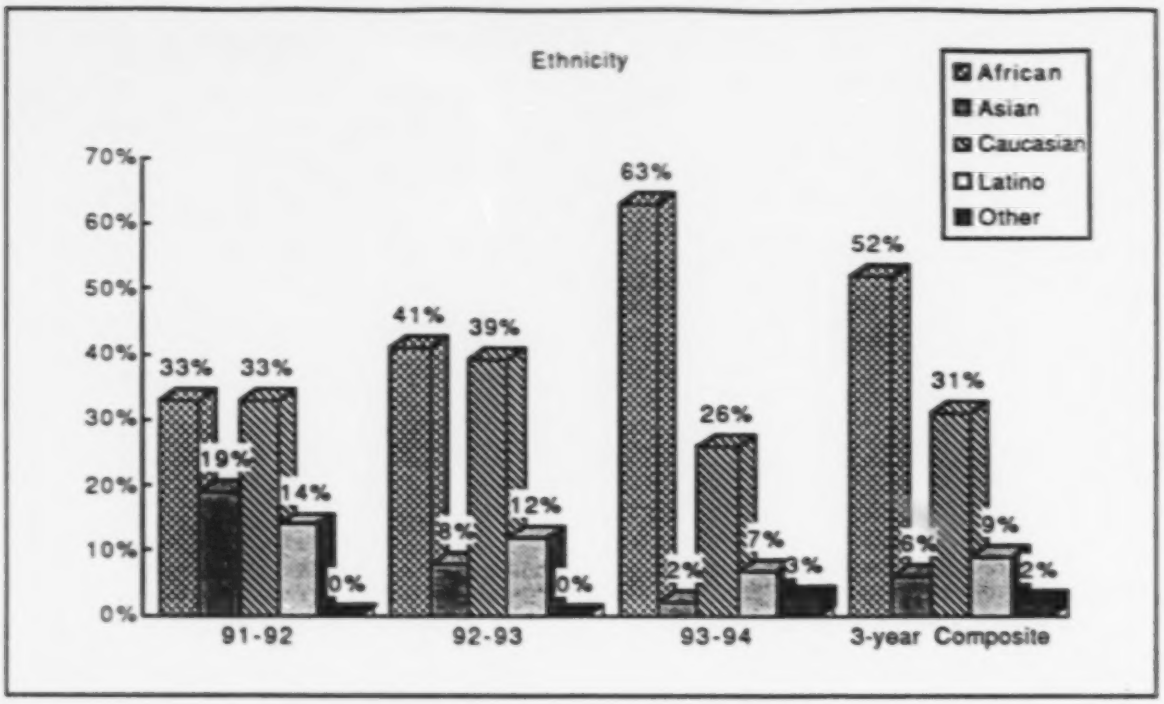
The chart below displays the increase in the number of PASS students over the past three years.



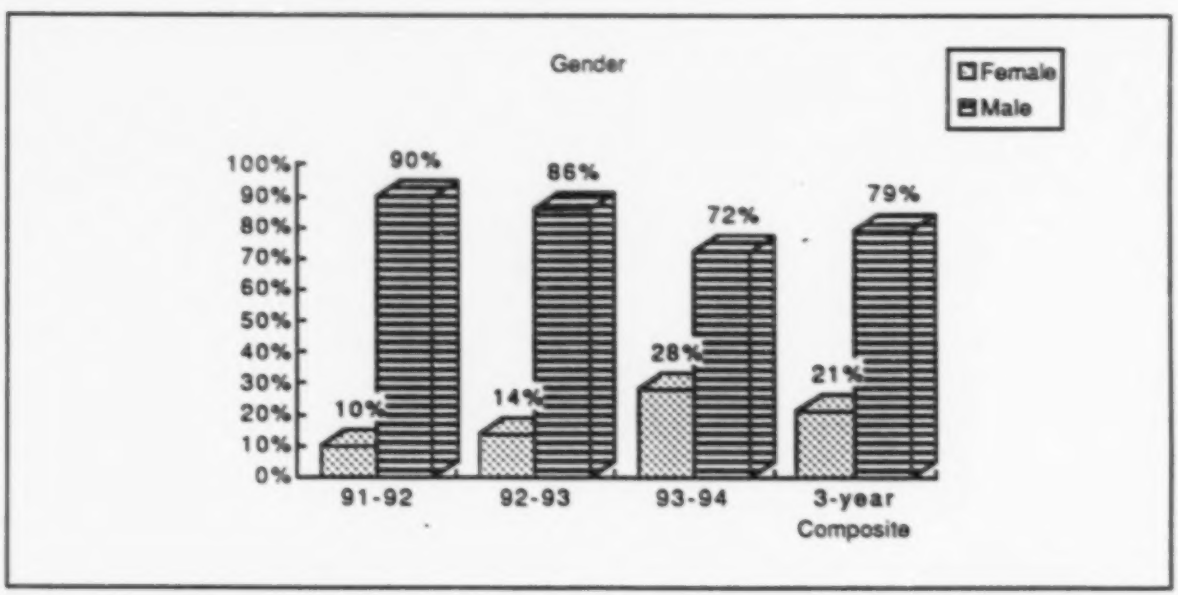
The PASS class is open to freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors. The chart below identifies the class makeup by grade level over the past three years.



The ethnic composition of students in the PASS program has been as follows.



The PASS class is open to both boys and girls. The chart below identifies the gender makeup over the past three years.



The Study

For each of the past three school years, PASS students at all schools have been matched with students in a control group based on gender, grade level, and ethnicity. Grade point averages (GPAs) for the spring semester prior to participation in the PASS class were collected for PASS students; grades covering the same period were collected for the control group. At the end of the school year during which students participated in the PASS class, GPAs for spring semester for both groups were collected again.

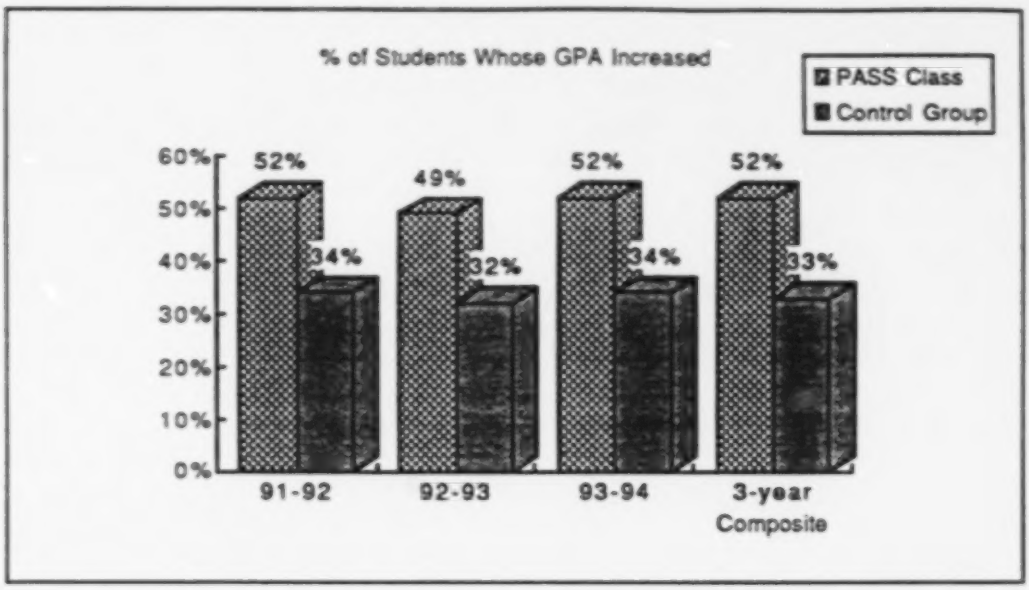
To summarize the impact of PASS on students' grades, the last three years of results for PASS students have been compared with those of control group students based on the following measurements:

- Percentage of students who increased their GPA
- Percentage of students who increased their GPA by a full grade point or more
- Percentage of students with no significant (>.1 in either direction) change in GPA
- Percentage of students who decreased their GPA
- Percentage of students who decreased their GPA by a full grade point or more
- The average GPA increase or decrease per student
- Percentage of students regaining academic eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities
- Percentage of students losing academic eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities

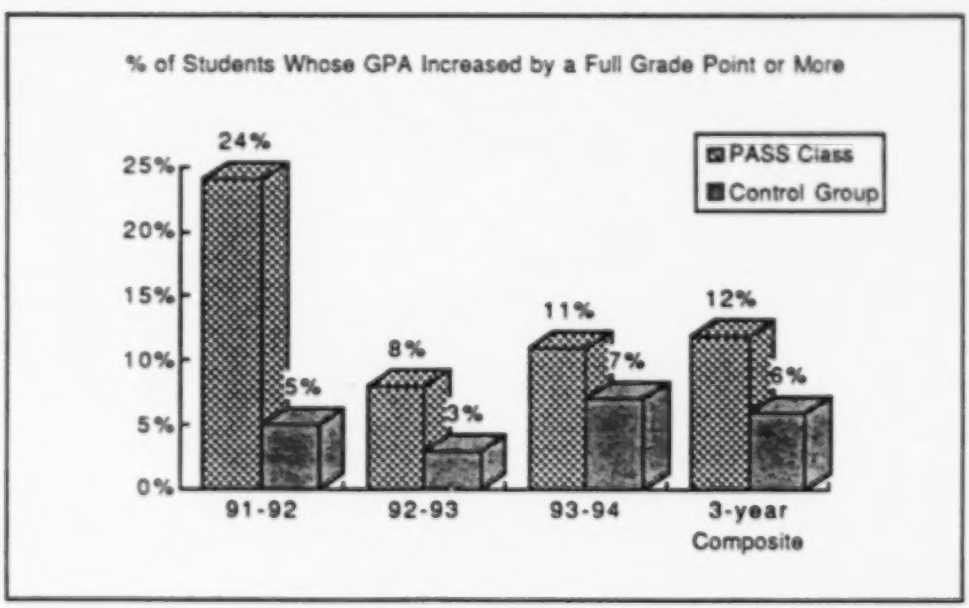
The Findings

As the following information demonstrates, each year, PASS students have outperformed those in the control group on all of the applicable measures listed above. A more detailed report for each year is available upon request.

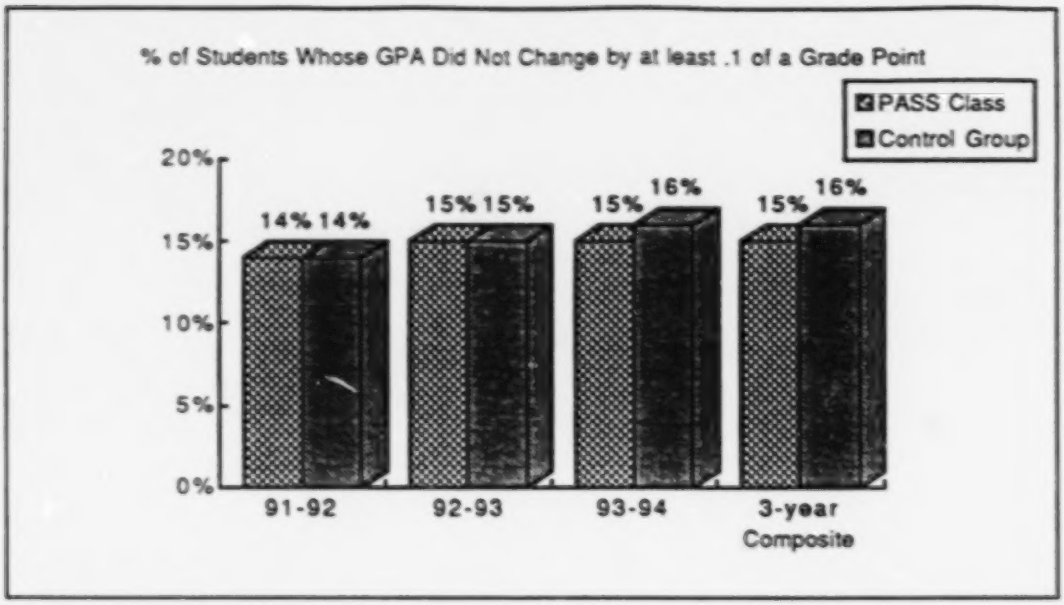
Increased GPA: The chart below compares the percentage of PASS and control group students who increased their GPA. The column to the right shows the three-year average. During the three-year period, fifty-eight percent (58%) more PASS students than control group students increased their grades.



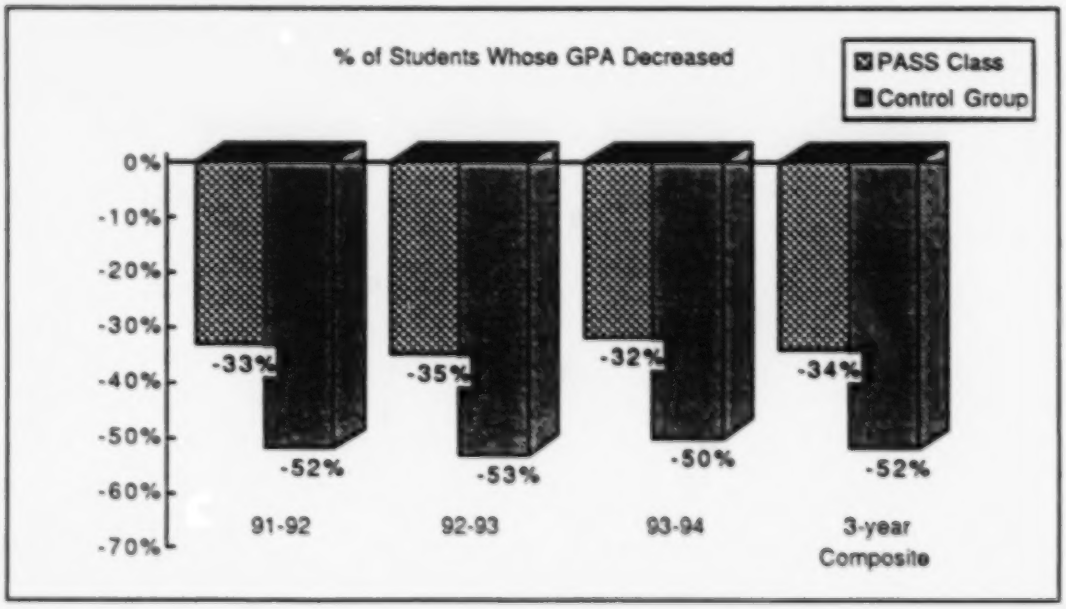
Increased GPA by A Full Grade Point or More: The percentage of PASS students who increased their grades by a full grade point or more is compared below to that of control group students who showed a similar increase. On average, more than twice as many PASS students as control group students have increased their grades by a full grade point or more.



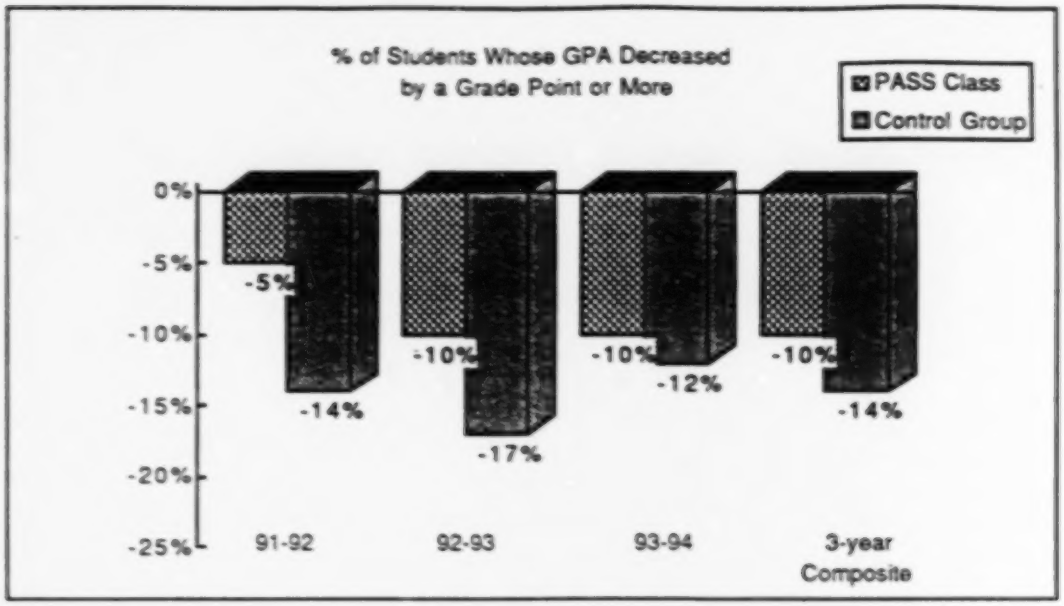
Grades Did Not Change: Each year some students, both in the PASS program and the control group, had grades that did not change by at least .10 of a grade point in either direction.



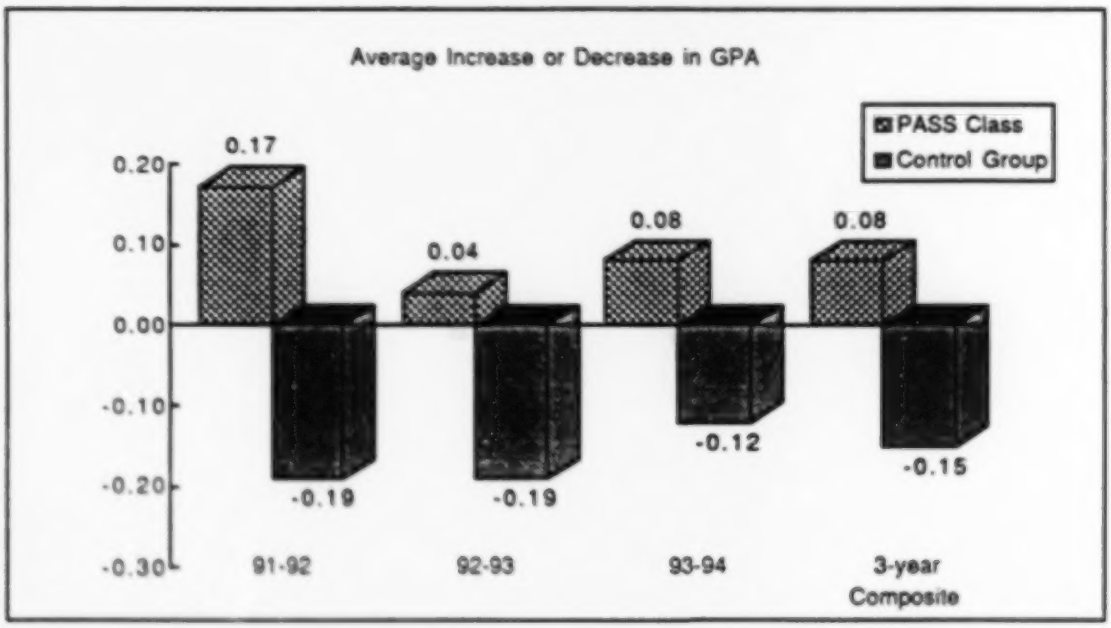
Decreased GPA: The chart below compares the percentage of PASS and control group students who decreased their GPA. The column to the right shows the three-year average. Overall, during this period, fifty-three percent (53%) more control group students than PASS students had their grades go down.



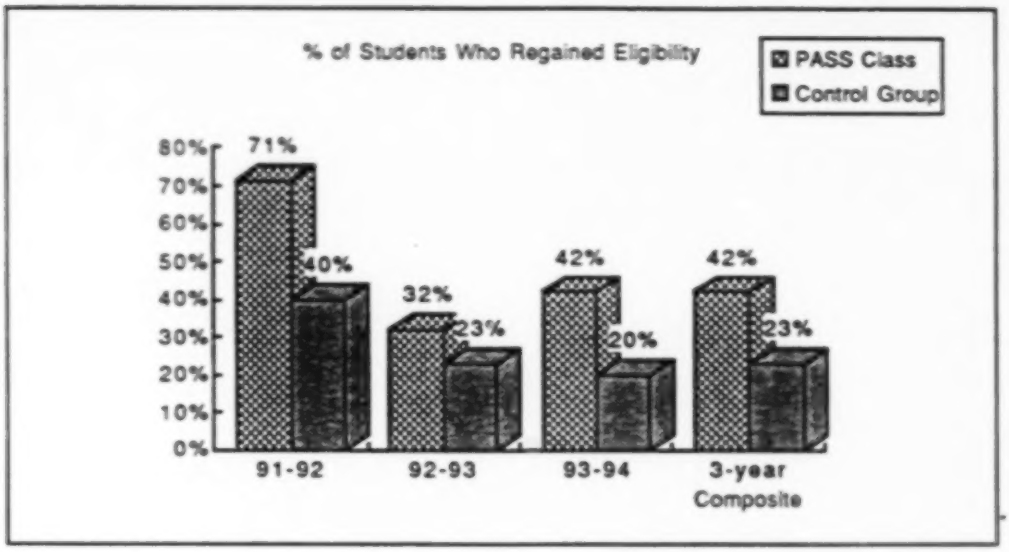
Decreased GPA by A Full Grade Point or More: The following chart compares the percentage of PASS and control group students whose GPA decreased by a full grade point or more. On average, control group students were 40% more likely to have their grades drop by at least a full grade point than were students in the PASS class.



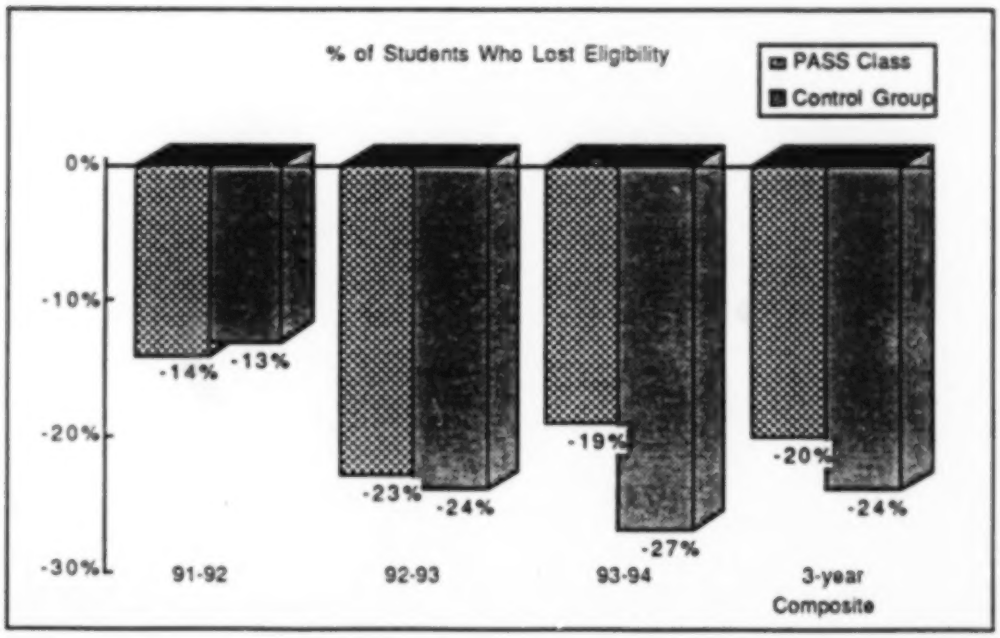
Average Increase/Decrease in GPA Per Student: The chart below shows the average increase or decrease in grade point for PASS students compared to those in the control group. On average, PASS students outperformed their counterparts in the control group by almost a quarter of a grade point.



Percentage of Students Who Regained Academic Eligibility: Administrators, parents, coaches and athletic directors are all concerned about students' maintaining academic eligibility. In California, for example, students must maintain a C average (2.0) in order to be able to participate in extracurricular activities. The following chart shows the percentage of PASS who began the year with less than a 2.0 and then regained eligibility by the end of the year of their participation in the PASS class, compared with the percentage of control group students who regained eligibility. Composite data over three years shows that PASS students were eighty-seven percent (87%) more likely than control group students to regain their eligibility.



Percentage of Students Who Lost Academic Eligibility: The chart below shows the percentage of students in the PASS class and control group who began the year with at least a 2.0 but who lost eligibility during the course of the school year. Control group students over the three-year period were twenty percent (20%) more likely than PASS students to lose eligibility during the course of the year.



Findings Summary. During the three-year period covered by the study:

- Fifty-eight percent (58%) more PASS students than control group students increased their grades during the year that the PASS students participated in the PASS class.
- More than twice as many PASS students as control group students increased their grades by a full grade point or more during the school year.
- Fifty-three percent (53%) more control group students than PASS students had their grades go down during the year.
- On average, PASS students outperformed their counterparts in the control group by almost a quarter of a grade point per student.
- PASS students were eighty-seven percent (87%) more likely than control group students to regain their eligibility during the year.
- Control group students over the three-year period were twenty percent (20%) more likely than PASS students to lose eligibility during the course of the year.

Conclusion

The Three-Year Impact Study and Summary Report confirms that PASS enables high school students to improve their academic performance as measured by overall GPA. Further, the report supports the view held by the American Sports Institute that in order to improve the academic performance of physically-oriented students, there needs to be an *increased*, not a decreased, emphasis on the appropriate study and practice of sport.